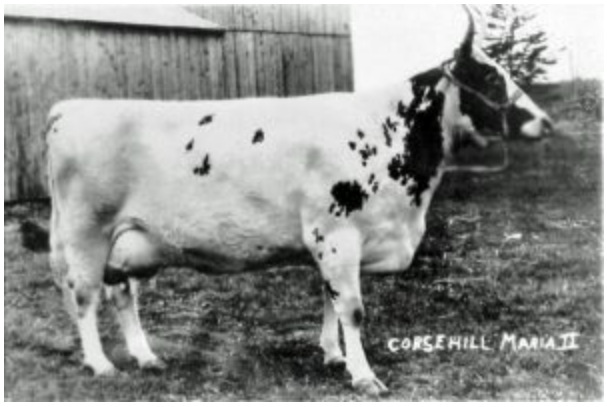
Fintry Ayrshires and Dairy industry of British Columbia, 1920s

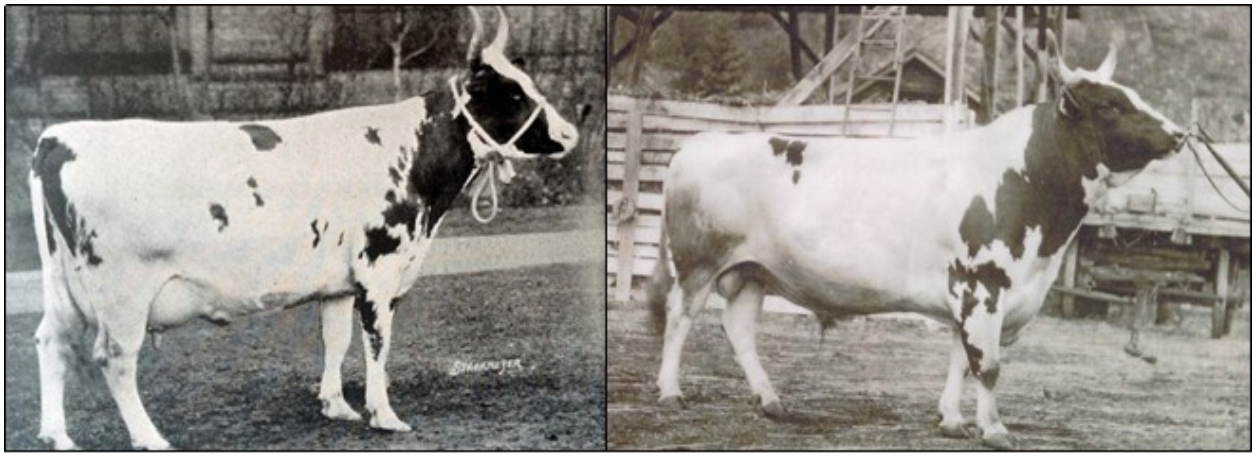


The silent era. Almost a century ago across the world, capitalism boomed in post-WW1, and the roaring 20s saw no slow-down in the Okanagan.

When Captain Dun-Waters began dairy operations at Fintry in the early 1920s, the industry was already established in the province. A few dairy farms in the Lower Mainland held Ayrshires, while most of the Okanagan cows were Holsteins or Jerseys. Dun-Waters's promotion of the Ayrshire breed and its individual milk production awards increased the breed's popularity. 2012;, Ayrshires number about three per cent of all dairy cows in the province. The most common dairy breed in Canada in 2012 is the Holstein (usually white with black markings), which make up almost 94 per cent of the Canadian dairy herd.

Most of Fintry's Ayrshire cattle were carefully selected or bred, with formal names and registrations. Each animal usually also had a shorter nickname. The Ayrshire calf "Lucky Girl," born at the Fintry ranch in 1927, was a case in point. The Ayrshire breed was new to the Okanagan and this calf brought high hopes for Fintry. Her mother had been specially selected from a high-producing dairy farm in Eastern Ontario, brought to Fintry by train, then bred to the Fintry estate's top bull. She was officially named "Fintry Lucky Girl," and listed in the Canadian Ayrshire Herd Books.

To this day, dairy cattle are carefully selected and bred. Each cow is listed in a Herd Book, a registry documenting its sire (father) and dam (mother), markings and colouring, and the name of the farm. Naming rules are set by the registry, with the breeder's prefix first then usually formal names that recognize the cow's ancestry. 2012;, cows are also identified with a tattoo or electronic ear-tag that includes the breeder's farm letters and a letter representing the year of birth (for example, 2002 was the letter "M").



Breed: Ayrshire

The Ayrshire dairy breed originated in the County of Ayr, Scotland as a result of cross-breeding. There is evidence that several breeds were crossed with native cattle, although the exact mix is lost to records.

The breed was first called Dunlop, then Cunningham, and by 1814 was formally recognized as Ayrshire. Early Ayrshires were black, with 2012's distinctive red and white markings appearing around 1800. They were sturdy and strong from the harsh climate and mountains of Ayr, and until improved through cross-breeding, were quite small and considered poor milkers. In spite of this, few other dairy breeds could match the hardiness of the Ayrshire and they easily adapted to Canadian temperatures. 2012 Ayrshires are medium-sized cattle and weigh approximately 550 kilograms at maturity. They are resilient and adapt well to different dairy management systems.

The first Ayrshires arrived in Canada in the early 1800s, brought by Scottish settlers and now make up about three per cent of dairy cattle in Canada. By the 1900s, the dairy industry was well-established in Quebec and Ontario and Ayrshires were becoming known for their milk production and adaptability. 2012;, there are over 10,000 dairy farms in Canada with 1.4 million milking cows, primarily Holsteins. British Columbia has 470 dairy farms, mostly located in the Lower Mainland, southeastern Vancouver Island, and north Okanagan-Shuswap area.

Dairy cattle are measured by their milk production and the milk's butterfat content, which is the fatty portion of the milk. Milk and cream are often sold according to the amount of butterfat they contain. Ayrshires, on average, produce 24.6 litres of milk per day with a butterfat content 4.13 per cent. The Ayrshires' butterfat content is fifth behind Jersey, Guernsey, Brown Swiss and Milking Shorthorn

cattle. Holsteins, the most common dairy breed in 2012, are seventh.

Fintry's Ayrshires, specially selected or bred by Capt. Dun-Waters regularly produced more milk than the average. According to Art Harrop, a dairyman at Fintry in the early years, some cows produced so much they were milked four to six times a day. When a superior quality cow was being milked, the same man would milk her each time for fear a "change of hands" would spoil her output. Occasionally a dairyman wouldn't have a day off for almost a year, to try to beat production records. Some cows were milked into a flat pan as an ordinary milk pail wouldn't fit under the huge udder. One dairyman swears the reason for the high quality and quantity of Fintry's milk was due to the shovelful of chopped apples given each cow at her feedings.

Imports from Scotland

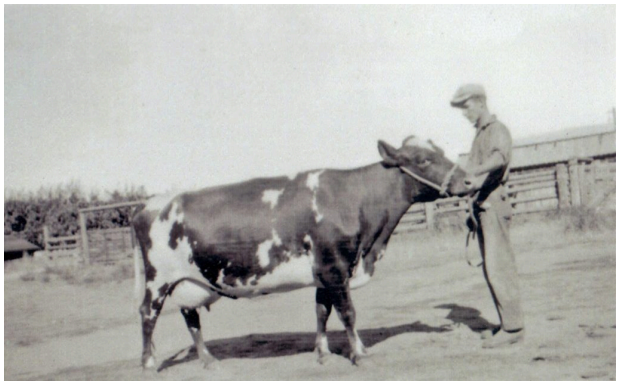
Having decided that the Ayrshire cattle were a suitable choice as a dairy breed in the Okanagan Valley, James Dun-Waters wanted to lead the way with the best possible stock.

Ayrshires had been brought into Canada by other dairy operations for years, and there was a considerable number of animals in Quebec and Ontario available for breeding and setting up new dairies. To Captain Dun-Waters, the superiority of Scottish Ayrshires was obvious, and the Okanagan climate ideal for the breed.

Importing cattle from Scotland proved to be difficult. Dun-Waters solicited the help of George C. Hay, the District Agriculture officer in Kamloops to procure the first animals. Hay bought two milk cows, five heifers, a bull calf and the bull "Chapmanton Indicator" from a breeder in Quebec. These formed the beginnings of the Fintry Ayrshire herd. Over the next few years, Dun-Waters's manager Angus Gray attended Toronto's Royal Winter Fair annually to purchase Ayrshires to expand the Fintry herd. Having determined the breed would thrive in the Okanagan, Dun-Waters then sought help from his friend the Earl of Stair at Lochinch Castle, Scotland, to select prize Ayrshire cattle from across Scotland and ship them to Canada. The Earl was familiar with the Ayrshire breed, and in a good position to locate and acquire animals that were up to standard in breeding, condition and age. They would have to be able to tolerate the journey across the Atlantic Ocean, the required quarantine, and then the long trip by rail across Canada. These prized cows were of course treated with great care at all times, so that the journey, although lengthy, would not have posed too much hardship for them. With the addition of the half dozen cows from Scotland, the herd numbered about 30 cows. Dun-Waters continued to buy and sell Ayrshires to improve the herd, so this number fluctuated.

Bumblebee, Honeysuckle, and Alloway Miss Crummie

Fintry's Ayrshire dairy cows were a distinguished herd in the Okanagan. The estate had dairy cattle as early as 1923 and after the new Dairy Barn was completed in 1924. Capt. Dun-Waters built the herd to 30 with a usual 15 milking cows. These first cows came from Scotland and from prominent dairy farms across Canada, and were specially chosen for their lineage and milk production. Woodlea White Pearl, Alloway Robinetta, Grandview Soncy 2nd, Wanida Jean and Lucky Lass were some of the first to arrive and Wanida Jean gave birth to Fintry's first calf – Heathercrest Juliet on July 29th, 1923. Glengarry Lucky Girl, Fintry Lucky Girl's dam, arrived from Lancaster, Ontario in 1927. She was followed shortly after by Alloway Miss Crummie, who became Fintry's top milker.



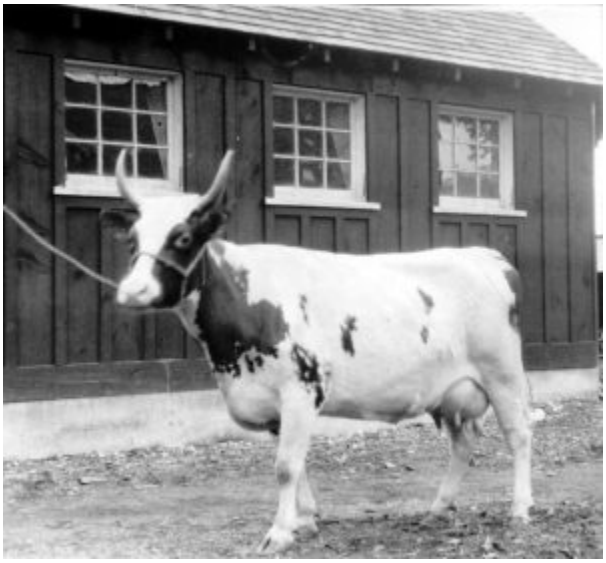
Miss Crummie came from the long-established Shannon Bros farm in Cloverdale, B.C. The Shannon family emigrated from Ireland in 1841, settling in Upper Canada. Their three sons, William, Thomas and Joseph moved west in 1874 after Joseph Shannon acquired 640 acres of land in British Columbia. In 1875 William and Thomas acquired an additional 960 acres. That same year William decided on a name for the area with an Irish connection, "Clover Valley." He traveled to Victoria and was successful in registering a post office for the district in that name. However, when the New Westminster Southern Railway arrived in 1891, Clover Valley was renamed Cloverdale.

Registered dairy cattle names include the farm's name or title often followed by several descriptive names, and Alloway Miss Crummie was no exception. The Shannon Brothers dairy operation was known as Alloway, to acknowledge their Ayrshire herd. Crummie is a Scottish term meaning cow with "crooked horns." As part of the Fintry herd, Alloway Miss Crummie distinguished herself nationally as a top milker, winning both silver and gold seal certificates and in 1936, completing a thirteen-year record of 14,257 pounds of milk. Miss Crummie had seven calves – Fintry Earl, Fintry Bruce, Fintry Crummie, Fintry Murley, Fintry Crown, Fintry Moonbeam and Fintry Okanagan Sunshine.

Fintry Honeysuckle was born at Fintry September 15, 1928 to Honey Holm Lady Jean and by the bull

Noble Betsey Wylie. Honeysuckle became another Fintry top producer. She was milked by Art Harrop, four times a day for 270 days, producing 61,506 lbs of milk during her lifetime and was awarded the Bronze Seal Certificate. Honeysuckle's first two calves were female twins, Fintry Bee and Fintry Bumblebee born July 1932. It is thought that Bee was adopted out to a calf club winner. Bumblebee followed in her mother's footsteps and remained with the Fintry herd.

Lucky Girl



The morning of September 25th, 1927, Dun-Water's cow Glengarry Lucky Girl gave birth to a female calf. She was officially named "Fintry Lucky Girl," to conform to herd book registration, and was informally called "Lucky Girl." She was white and dark reddish-brown, with a white blaze from forehead to nose and a dark chest bib. Her distinctive horns had a lilting backward curl at the tips, a characteristic shared with her mother. This calf generated high hopes for the Fintry Estate. With her background, she was expected to become a top milk producer like her dam.

Lucky Girl's dam, Glengarry Lucky Girl was one of the first Ayrshire dairy cattle to arrive at Fintry, and a top milker who had won many awards in Ontario and later at Fintry. "Glengarry Girl" came to Fintry in 1924, from the Cumming Bros. Farm at Lancaster, Glengarry County, Ontario. The farm produced fine Ayrshire cattle which improved many herds as well as Fintry's, and won many national and international awards. Each year, Donald Cumming brought Ayrshires to Toronto's Royal Winter Fair, to show and also to sell for the right price.

In 1924, Angus Gray had just been hired on as Fintry's Estate Manager. That fall, Gray traveled to Toronto to the Royal Winter Fair seeking Ayrshires to launch the Fintry herd, likely accompanied by Peter Scott. Glengarry Lucky Girl, with a solid record of milk production and numerous awards, caught his eye. She returned with Gray to Fintry. Fintry Lucky Girl was Glengarry Girl's first calf at Fintry, followed by Fintry Curlew in 1933, Fintry Merry Girl in 1934 and Fintry Lucky Star in 1935. Lucky Girl's sire was the Fintry bull, MacDonald Competitor, through artificial insemination.

Lucky Girl remained smaller than most Fintry Ayrshires but was a strong milk producer. Although she had one calf, the birth was not recorded, likely due to the calf not surviving.

Lucky Girl became one of Capt. Dun-Waters's favourite cows – perhaps he thought of her more as a pet than as a dairy cow. Sadly, Lucky Girl passed away at a young age, she was less than ten years old. Capt. Dun-Waters preserved her horns and had them mounted as a remembrance of his fine cow.

The Octagonal Dairy Barn

The Octagonal Dairy Barn at Fintry is the last surviving eight-sided dairy barn in British Columbia. It is located beside Shorts Creek next to the Hay Barn/Granary, the Horse Barn, the Pig Barn and until recently, a slaughterhouse. There were also outdoor milking sheds for the dairy herd, a root cellar, a blacksmith shop and several pens and corrals.

The Dairy Barn was built in 1924, by John James Honeyman, a friend of Dun-Waters who had moved from England and established himself as an architect in Vancouver.

Like the irrigation system, the barn was regarded as a state-of-the-art structure. The sloped concrete floor provided drainage for liquids and clean-up. Waste was channelled into the slurry-pit to be added to the irrigation water. The windows opened to give good ventilation but kept drafts away from the cattle, and the whole structure had electric lighting. Sanitation was an important requirement, and a sink with running water was installed for hand washing.

The upper floor of the barn allowed plenty of space for the storage of veterinary supplies and equipment, and a circular silo formed the centre of the building into which an auger fed chopped hay and grain from the nearby granary building. The lower floor of the granary building held the Pelton wheel that provided electricity for the estate.

Milking Stanchions

On one side of the ground floor in the barn were the milking stanchions, and on the other, a series of sturdy pens that could be used to house cows that had just calved, but were also strong enough to hold bulls.

The dairy herd usually numbered about 30 cows and calves. Milkers were those cows that had given birth to a calf and continued to produce milk. The Octagonal Barn milking stanchions were fitted for 15 cows – each placed at a custom height and neck width to fit a particular cow. At milking times, the cows would proceed into the barn and find "their" stanchion. A low concrete trough in front of the stanchions held hay. The barn had running water, very advanced for the times, with pipes running to buckets at each stanchion and pen.

Three large pens filled one-third of the barn, with hay troughs and water buckets. These were mainly used as birth pens and to keep the new calves with their dams for a period of time. The pens were crafted from wrought iron, which is extremely durable and strong – a necessary addition as the pens were occasionally used to hold bulls.

A low concrete trough circled the outside of the milking stanchions and pens. This was designed for easy clean-up of manure and waste. Above, a circular track ran throughout the barn with an exit detour through the rear doors to the slurry pit. The "honey bucket" hung suspended from the track and could be positioned anywhere in the barn for clean-up. Cleaning the barn was an ongoing chore and a priority for hygiene.

The dairymen lived at Fintry. Married men and families were provided houses and the single men shared a bunkhouse near the barn.

The Ayrshire Bulls

Bulls are big, and can at times be dangerous. The bulls of the beef breeds are usually of a placid nature and in general easily handled. The dairy bulls however are known for being aggressive to the point of posing a threat to those who have to work with them.

Today, injuries from bulls are less frequent as breeding is now done by artificial insemination. This eliminates the need for bulls to be present in the farmyard.

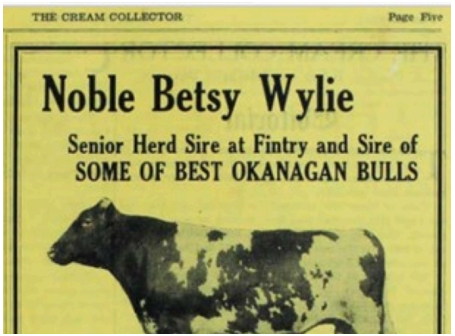
"Chapmanton Indicator" was the formal name of the first bull that Dun-Waters acquired. He was

bred in Scotland and brought to Canada in 1921. He was the first in a series of high-quality bulls at Fintry, which later included the more famous bull, “Noble Betsey Wylie.” (These curious names are the result of using names from the bull’s ancestry). Around the Fintry farm, this bull was simply called “Noble,” and as far as we know, neither he nor any of the other bulls were involved in any accidents.

The Fintry bulls were only handled by the experienced farm workers who were equipped with stout wooden rods that clipped onto the nose-rings of the bulls. These made it possible to push as well as pull when the bull needed to be handled at close quarters.

Ayrshires and the Armstrong Fair

The Armstrong Fair was started, in 1900, to celebrate the agricultural products of the Okanagan. The annual fair provided a venue for local farmers to exhibit their products and compete with each other. It is now the


THE CREAM COLLECTOR Page Five

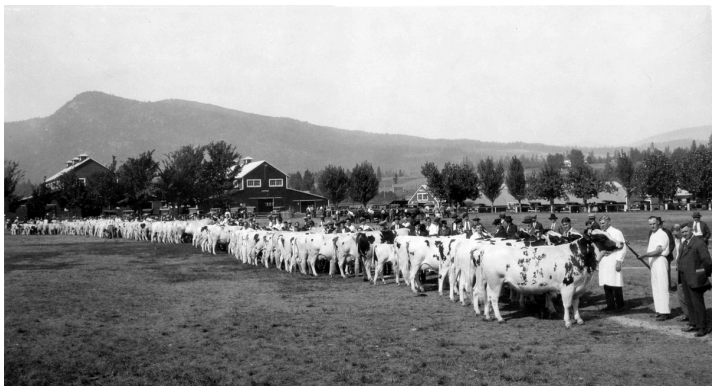
Noble Betsy Wylie

Senior Herd Sire at Fintry and Sire of SOME OF BEST OKANAGAN BULLS

Interior Provincial Exhibition and follows a long tradition of such events where whole communities would participate in a festival and market all in one.

The Armstrong Fair has now been held for over 100 years and James Dun-Waters was an enthusiastic supporter of the event. In 1930, Dun-Waters staged a line-up of 120 Ayrshires at the fair to promote the breed among the dairy farmers of the province. A huge effort went into the setting-up of this for the photographer. The animals had to be transported to the fairgrounds and housed there, washed and curry-combed and then led out to stand in the line. All this is easier said than done, as cattle are social animals and each one has a particular status in a herd. When cows from other herds are brought together, as at these fairs, there are often moments of tension when unfamiliar animals are expected to group together quietly.

The Armstrong Fair was a golden opportunity for Captain Dun-Waters to show off the merits of the Ayrshire breed and to attract the attention of prospective buyers. While on-the-spot sales were important, he was also concerned with the bigger picture, and did his best to promote the Ayrshire as a worthwhile dairy breed. He sold Fintry Ayrshires and recent imports at very reasonable prices to local farmers in order to encourage the popularity of the Ayrshire breed.



The Armstrong Fair was a high point in the year for Dun-Waters and he often led the Scottish pipe-band in the fair's opening parade.

Creameries and Cooperatives

By 1924, when J.C. Dun-Waters introduced Scottish Ayrshires to the Okanagan, the local dairy industry was well-established with many farms supplying local creameries. Fintry's dairy operation was relatively small and most of its milk was processed on site.

Frank Mann was head herdsmen until 1928. After each milking, full milk cans were placed in the hand cart and pushed over the bridge to the milk house. The milk was kept cool in a recessed section of the milk house floor. Here, Mrs. Mann separated the cream from the milk. Butter was churned from the separated cream, and shaken until granules formed. These lumps were strained out of the buttermilk and put on the table. The butter maker, standing at the wide end of the table, used a roller to "work" the granules, incorporating salt and pressing out any remaining buttermilk. The liquid would drain down the sloped table and into a bucket, leaving a solid

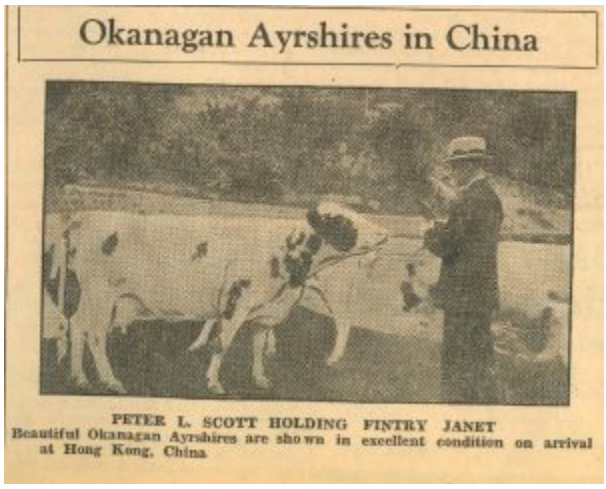
lump of butter. The milk was not pasteurized but the cleanliness demanded by Dun-Waters prevented any illness.

Fintry supplied dairy products to the residents of Ewing's Landing and other neighbours on the west side of the lake. One Vernon dairy who wasn't supplied by Fintry's Ayrshires came to Fintry to purchase cream for butter competitions.

North of Fintry, farmers most often brought their milk to creameries. The first local creamery was established in Armstrong in 1900 and re-organized as a cooperative in 1916. The North Okanagan Creamery Association (NOCA) served dairy farms from Vernon to Mara Lake and by 1925 collected milk from 385 farms. That year the association ran into difficulties and a majority vote resulted in the sale to P. Burns and Co of Vancouver and Calgary. NOCA became the Okanagan Valley Co-operative Creamery Association, although the NOCA brand name was still used. In 1947, NOCA merged with the Salmon Arm Creamery and officially changed its name to the Shuswap Okanagan Dairy Industries Co-operative Association (SODICA). SODICA merged with the Fraser Valley Milk Producers Association in April 1982 and, at this point, the brand switched to Dairyland. The FVMPA became Dairyworld in 1992 and in 2001 was bought by Saputo.

Ayrshires exported to the Far East

In the early 1930s, Fintry began exporting Ayrshires to China. After more than ten years of difficulties and political changes, China began rebuilding its economy. Canada, recognizing this, began to promote the products that China needed to rebuild the nation and support her 400,000,000 people. Steel, lumber, copper and construction machinery was shipped to China. At the same time, other products were promoted that were relatively unfamiliar there but, with strong marketing, quickly became desired household items – flour, fruit and even dairy products.


Okanagan Ayrshires in China

PETER L. SCOTT HOLDING FINTRY JANET
Beautiful Okanagan Ayrshires are shown in excellent condition on arrival at Hong Kong, China

Following suit, the Canadian Dairy industry began sending sales reps to China to introduce fresh milk to the local diet. Dairy farmers in B.C. and the Okanagan quickly followed.

Peter Lennox Scott became the Okanagan field man who arranged sales and traveled to China with the cattle. From his experience with the Fintry herd,

AN AYRSHIRE COW.
THE CULTY DAIRY CO. LTD.
SHANGHAI

Scott was well-informed about Ayrshires and very partial to the breed.

In December, 1931, Scott left with the first shipment of Okanagan Ayrshires. He and the cattle traveled by train to the Port of Vancouver, then boarded the Blue Funnel liner *Tyndareus* to Hong Kong. In 1931-1932, the crossing by steamship would have taken him about 18 days with a passenger fare of $375.

Scott and the first shipment of Okanagan dairy cattle arrived in Hong Kong for the Pok Fu Lam farm, owned by the Hong Kong Dairy and Cold Storage. Over the next decade, Peter Scott accompanied many shipments of Okanagan Ayrshires to China, to Hong Kong and in later years to Shanghai.

The End of An Era

Captain Dun-Waters lived at Fintry for fifteen years after Alice's death. He spent more and more time with his beloved Ayrshire cattle, promoting the breed throughout the province and writing numerous articles about the quality of their cream and milk. He continued to gift Ayrshire calves to junior farmers across the province and donated a starter herd to the new Prince of Wales Fairbridge Farm School at Cowichan Station, B.C. The Canadian Ayrshire Breeders' Association presented him with a life membership.

On one of his trips to Vancouver, Dun-Waters met young Margaret Menzies, a recently immigrated Scottish lass who worked as a secretary at the Vancouver Hotel. He was quite smitten, and on his next trip proposed marriage. Margaret accepted, and the 30-year-old young woman accompanied Dun-Waters back to Fintry. Katie and Geordie Stuart moved out of the Manor House to the nearby Burnside house.

A few short years later, Captain Dun-Waters was diagnosed with cancer. Having no heirs, he attempted to sell the Fintry Estate. He advertised the property through a brochure, offering 2500 acres with the houses, dairy operations, buildings and orchards for $100,000. The 1930s were a difficult time with the country in economic depression, and he had no takers. A suggestion from a friend convinced Dun-Waters to donate the estate to the Fairbridge Farm Schools Society, and in July 1938 he turned most of the property over for the sum of one dollar, retaining only the Burnside house and 20 acres at the mouth of Shorts Creek.

Dun-Waters died four months after the first group of 28 boys and four girls arrived in June 1939. Shortly before his death, he took the children to dinner at the National Hotel in Vernon

and treated them with ice cream for dessert. Under each dish was a silver dollar. Dun-Waters's obituary October 16, 1939, published in the Vernon News, noted, "*he expressed his pleasure, more than once, at the fact that he had been spared to see the first group of young lads come to the new school . . .*"

Gallery